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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: review of the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

Statement submitted by Womankind Worldwide, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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Statement

The work of Womankind Worldwide[1] and the experiences of our partners over the years have reaffirmed our belief that there can be no sustainable development or peace and security without a commitment to gender equality and the promotion and protection of women's human rights.

Women everywhere are making important contributions to the development of their communities and their countries, but continue to be excluded from the processes and, consequently, the gains of development. The MDGs will merely serve to reinforce this, unless they are placed within a human rights framework and the centrality of a women's human rights approach to development is emphasised.[2]

The full and effective implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and other human rights instruments are essential for advancing the implementation of the UN Millennium Declaration and achieving the MDGs. They can also act as useful practical tools to guide and strengthen national-level MDG processes.[3]

We must use the Beijing +10 Review and the Millennium Review as opportunities to emphasise this interdependence. Building a bridge between these two reviews will help the women's movement ensure that the global political momentum generated by the MDGs is directed towards the achievement of gender equality and women's human rights.

We recommend that all stakeholders:

- Reframe the MDGs as human rights obligations using CEDAW, the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), and the Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) as a framework
- Acknowledge the cross-cutting nature of gender equality and the empowerment of women in global and national-level monitoring and implementation of the MDGs and ensure that national targets, indicators and strategies to meet the MDGs are, as a minimum requirement, compliant with and complementary to CEDAW, the BPFA and national gender equality instruments
- Work together to encourage ownership of the MDG process in the global North and South and to improve efforts to monitor and report on achievements and failures in integrating a gender perspective in the practical implementation of the Goals
- Integrate a gender and women's human rights perspective in the implementation and review of the Millennium Declaration, including a review of all of the commitments made, in particular the commitments to promote gender equality and women's empowerment, to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement CEDAW

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[1] See www.womankind.org.uk to find out more about our work.

[2] "Linking women's human rights and the MDGs: an agenda for 2005" Genevieve Renard Painter, commissioned by the UK Gender and Development Network, p. 2. For further information on the Gender and Development Network, please visit www.gadnetwork.org.uk.

[3] See "Out of the Margins: The MDGs Through a CEDAW Lends", Ceri Hayes, for WOMANKIND Worldwide, for practical examples of how CEDAW can be used to strengthen the implementation of the MDGs. Some countries are already using tools such as CEDAW and national gender equality instruments in this way. See, for example, the Albania National Report on Progress Towards Achieving the Millennium Development Goals, 2004.

- Make full use of other instruments and mechanisms, such as the official reporting process for CEDAW, to strengthen the links between women's human rights and the MDGs and to monitor progress made by Member States
- Earmark resources to ensure these recommendations are implemented.

We recommend that the CSW adopt and take forward these recommendations to ensure that the linkages between the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Declaration are duly taken into account.